

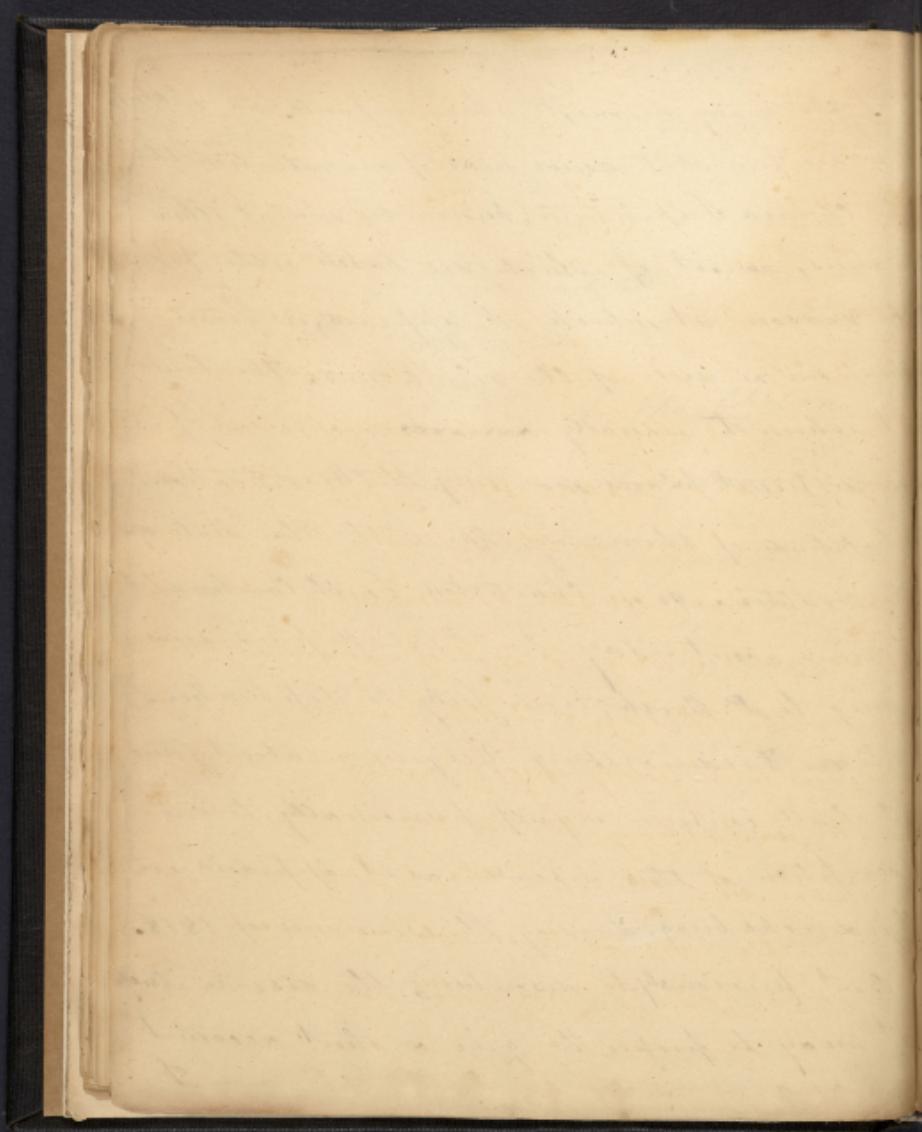
2 No. 7
Withers-
Cholera-

Cholera Infantum.

Hobs. J. Withers
(1808)

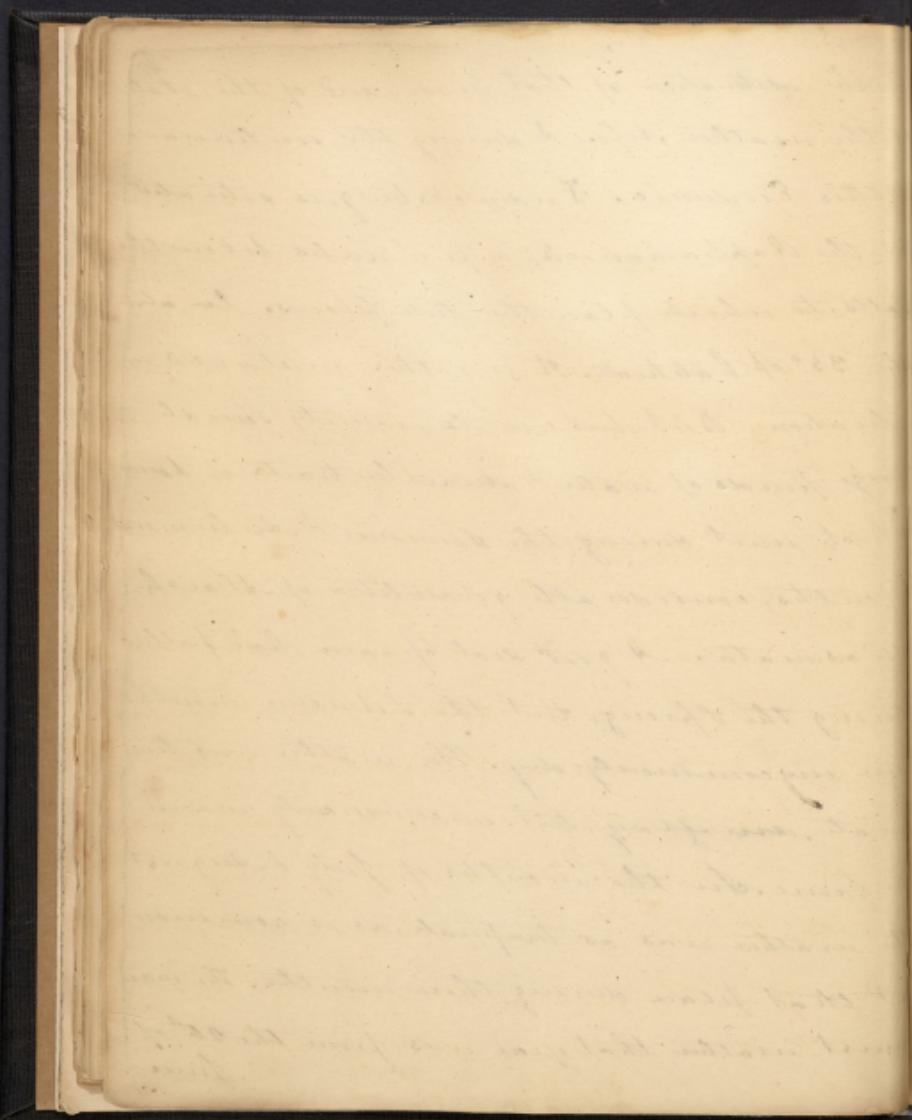
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Of the many diseases, to which infants are subject;
there are few that deserve more of our attention than
the Cholera Infantum; known by several other
names, most of which are taken either from
the season at which it appears, or from
some one or more of the symptoms. The time
at which it usually ~~occurs~~ occurs; differs
in different places according to the situation
& latitude of them together with the state of
the weather. As in Charleston South Carolina it
appears about May. In Philadelphia, accor-
ding to Dr Rush, from July to September.
And in Fredericksburg Virginia about June.
I shall confine myself principally, to a de-
scription of this disease, as it appeared in
Fredericksburg, during the summer of 1808.
But previous to describing the disease itself
it may be proper to give a short account of



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of the situation of that place, and of the state
of the weather; before & during the continuance
of this Epidemic. Fredericksburg, is situated
on the Rappahannock; a few miles below the
falls, to which place the tide flows, in about
the 38° of Latitude. It is rather an elevated si-
tuation. But has in its vicinity several
large ponds of water & generally tracts of land
which melt during the summer & continual
months, considerable quantities of Marsh
herbaceous. A good deal of rain had fallen
during the Spring, but the summer months
were uncommonly dry. The weather was tem-
perate during day, but uncommonly warm
in June. In the months of July & August
the weather was as temprate, as is common
at that place during these months. The war-
mer weather that year was from the 25th of
June.



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June to the 3rd of July during which time, the
Mercury in the Thermometer ranged from
84° to 95° of Fahrenheit. The children of that
place had enjoyed very good health, until about
the middle of June; when the disease first
made its appearance in a family of Negro
children who lived near a pond of stagnant
water, from which place it spread to several
neighbouring families & in a short time
became general. The disease came on some
times with a Diarrhoea, which continued some
days without much apparent indisposition
but fit more frequently came on with a
violent prickling & pricking; the pulse was
quick & frequent. The face was sometimes
swelled. The fever which accompanied it was
indistinctly of the intermitting kind; & the ex-
acerbations were discoverable generally in the
evening

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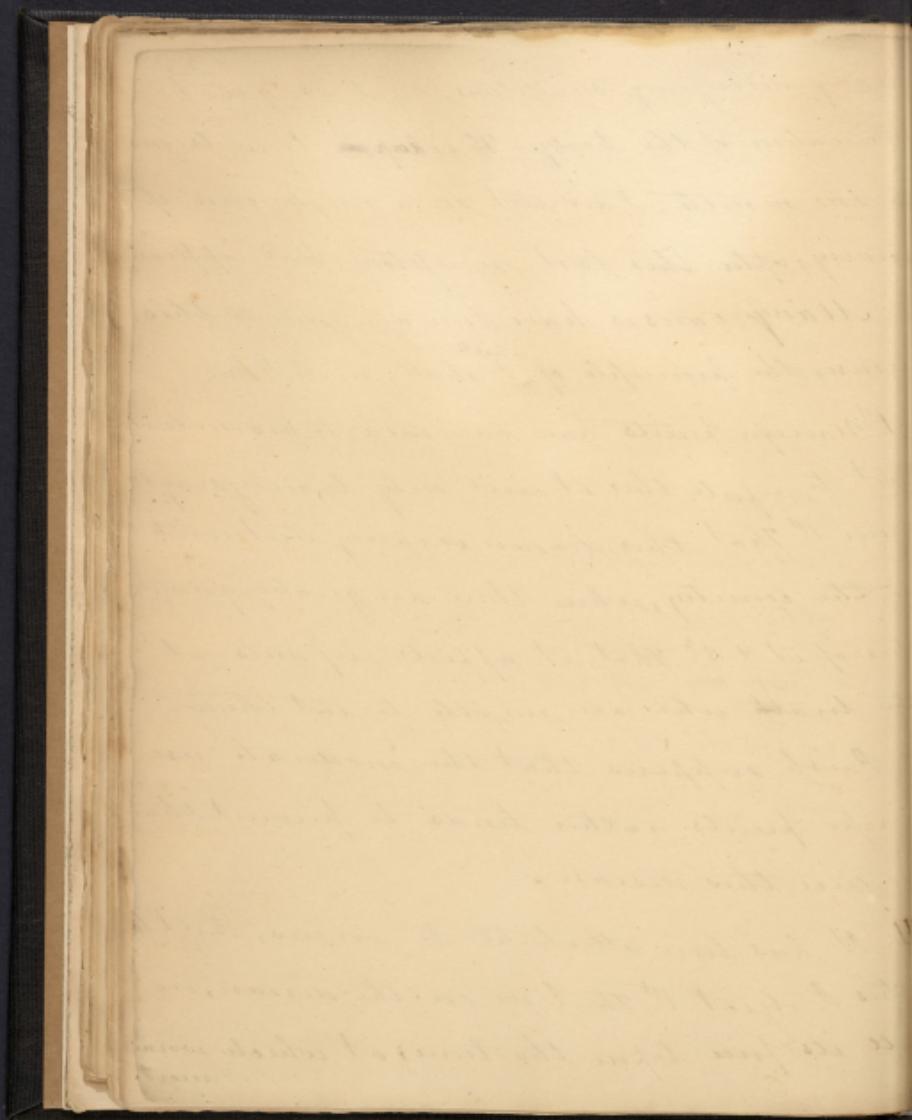
w evening, the matter discharged by vomiting,
was generally of a yellow, or green colour. the
stools were sometimes of the same colours, but
not infrequently mucus tinged with blood
was passed. Noises were frequently dischar-
ged, the eyes appeared languid & hollow; I
was much surprised to see many of the
patients, sleep with their eyes half closed.
It affected children from the first or second
week after birth until the third year, after
which few ~~were~~ ^{were} affected by it. It was much
influenced by the weather, cool weather ge-
nerally abating the ^{violence of the} symptoms, & hot wa-
ther aggravating them. It proved fatal
in a few cases in twenty-four hours, but
when it was of long continuance, its fatal
termination was gradual & attended by
many

many distressing symptoms, such as great
emaciation of the body. If ~~it~~ ⁵ keeps, convulsions
& a sore mouth, I did not see a single case of
recovery, after this last symptom had appeared.

Many causes have been assigned to this
disease, the principle of ^{which} I shall mention.

1st Unripe fruits have been said to produce it.
But to refute this it will only be necessary to
observe 1st That this disease is rarely met with
in the country, where there are greater quantities
of it & 2^d that it affects infants at
the st month who are unable to eat them.
Dr Rush supposes that the moderate use
of ripe fruits rather tends to prevent than
produce this disease.

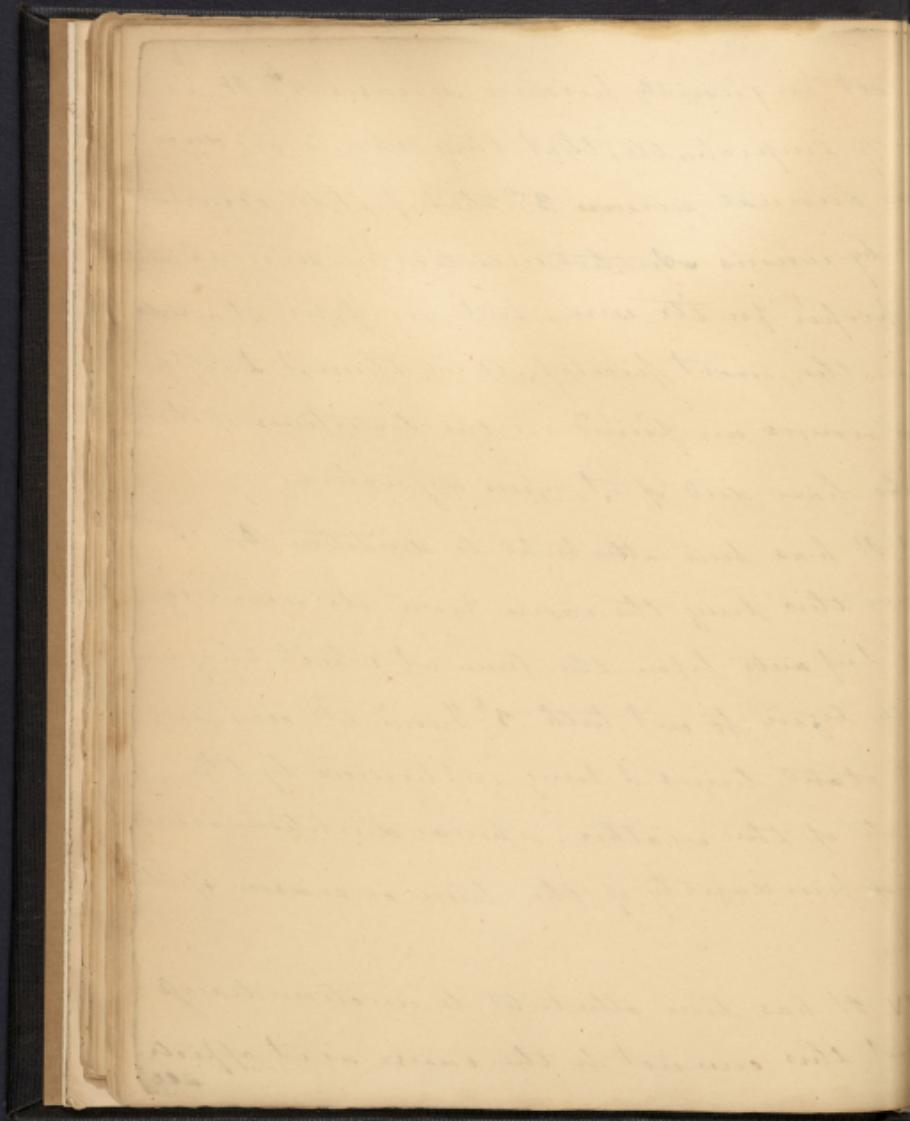
It has been attributed to worms, But to
this I object 1st that we see the disease, in
all its force before the time at which worms
most



most frequently produce diseases. 2^d It is
very improbable, that they should produce
an annual disease 3^d that if it be occasion-
ed by worms ~~the~~ Antithrometic medicines would
be proper for its cure, but we find it visits
us the most frequent of them, & lastly
no worms are found in the intestines of those
who have died of it, upon dissection.

III It has been attributed to dentition. But I
deny this being the cause from its occurring
in Infants before the time at which they usu-
ally begin to cut teeth. 4^d From its occurring
at stated times & being influenced by the
state of the weather. whereas dentition occurs
independently of the time or season of the
year.

IV It has been attributed to mucus lining
But this cannot be the cause as it affects
all



clapus of children.

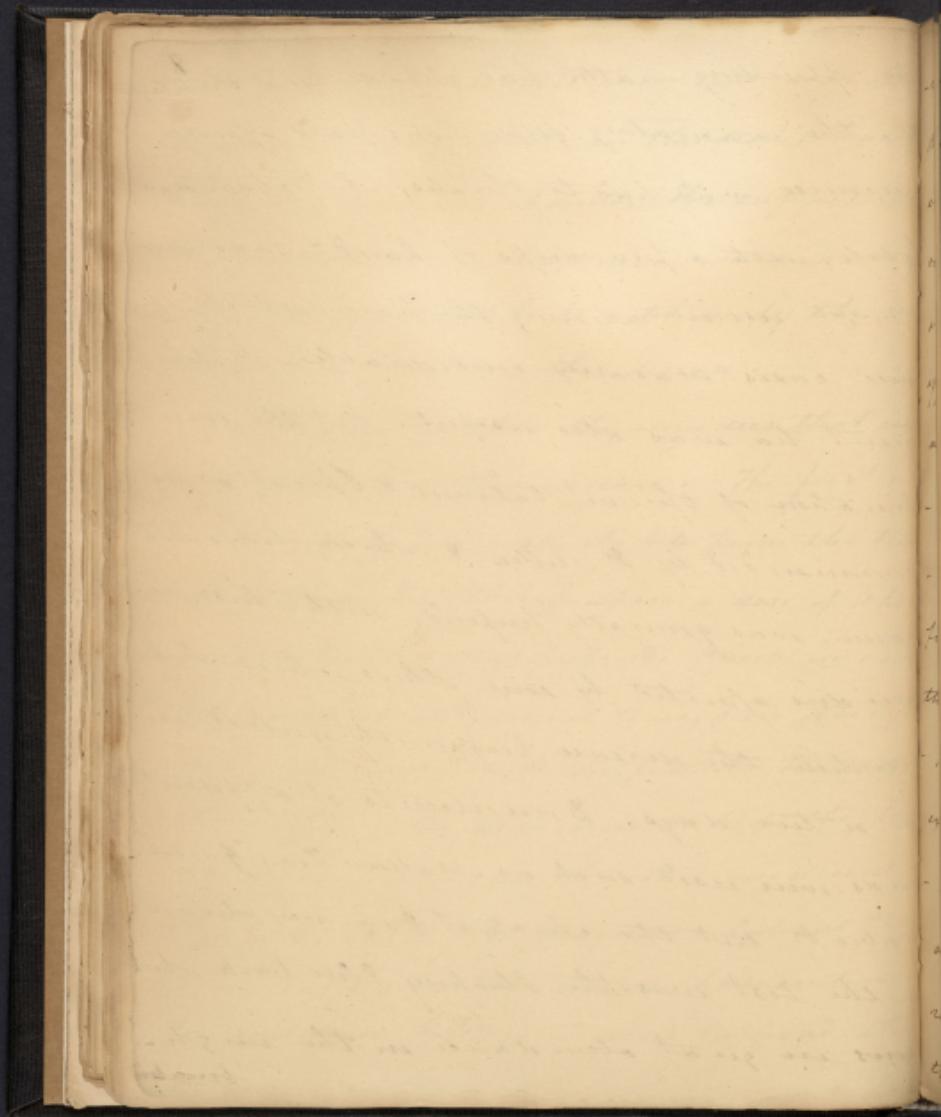
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V Dr Rush, supposes it to be a modification of the Remitting Fever of adults. I am disposed to adopt this opinion from the following reasons. 1st From its being attended with Bilious discharges &c 2^d From the Remissions & Exacerbations of the fever, that accompanied it. 3rd From the time & place, at which it occurs being nearly the same, as those at which the Remitting fever appears in adults. In the month of August the Sollets of the family of Stigges, in which I mentioned the disease as first appearing, were affected with the Remitting fever. In this family both diseases were more violent, than in any other; which I have attributed to their being near a large pond of water, which I consider as being the remote cause of both diseases. &c

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I think Dr Rush accounts very satisfactorily for its appearing earlier in children; than
commencing soon in Adults. He supposes, that
the constitutions of children are more per-
-sisted from weakness to be acted on by the re-
-causes, that produce this disease.

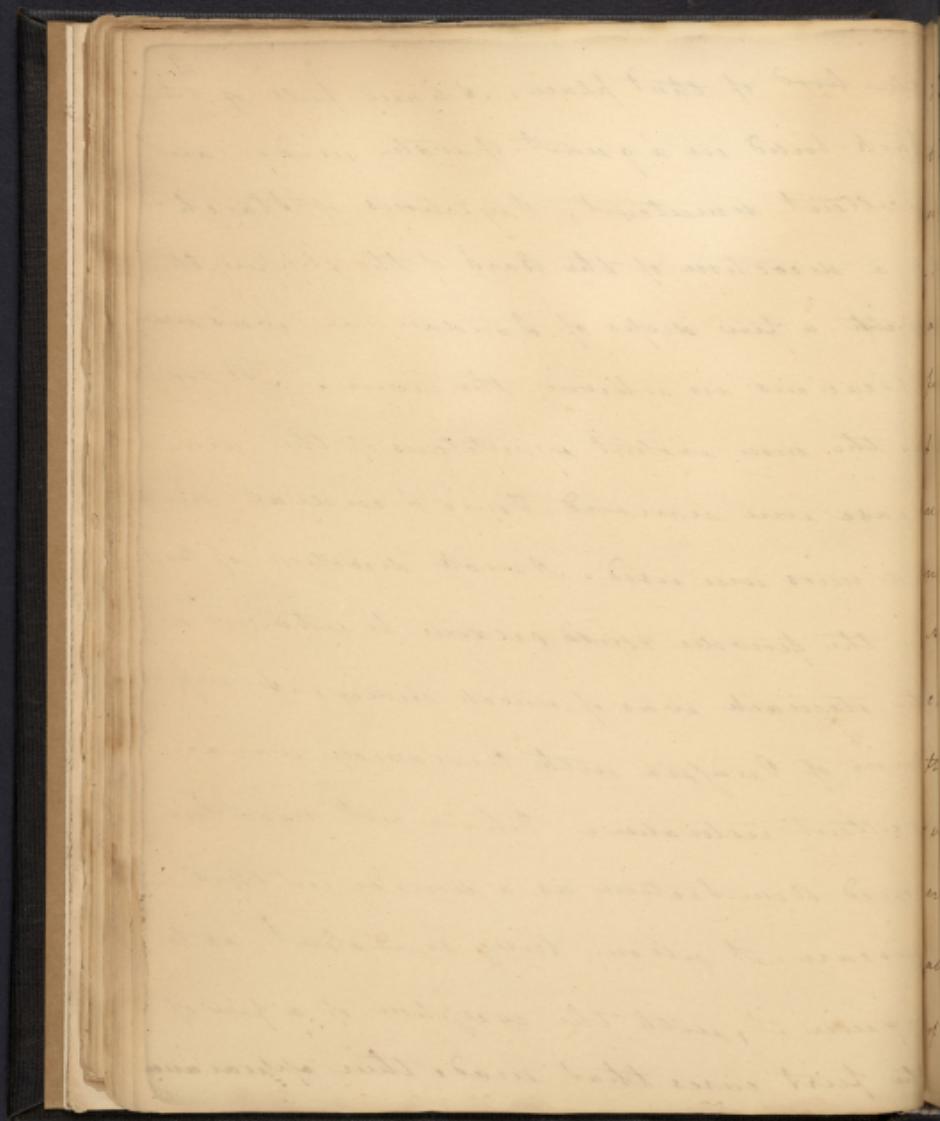
I shall now mention the remedies that are
employed to cure this disease. The first in
cation was to evacuate the bile from the Stom-
& Intestines. For this purpose a dose of the
-guttable Emetic was prepared. Which in some
cases was repeated several times, & in others
single one was found sufficient. The next
thing that was done, was to keep the bowels
open by means of some Laxative medicine
Mannia, Caster oil, Magnesia Calomel &
some cases when the disease had continued
for sometime, & where it was supposed the

the opposing matter had already been thrown off, the evacuating plan was laid aside & recourse was had to Opium, & Tartaric Sulph, with a few drops of Laudanum was found & much use in reliving the pain, which in some cases was very considerable, Pepper mint tea was also useful, but the combination of Opium, Calomel & Senna as are commanded by Dr Miller & which bears his name, was generally preferred, with these medicines assisted by some others which I shall mention the disease frequently yielded in one or two days. Decoctions of different kinds were used, such as, Mallow Tea, Green Salsify & but the cheapest & in my opinion the best was the Slippery Elm bark which was in great abundance in the neighbourhood



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bark wood of that place, I have full of the bark boiled in a quart of water made an excellent emetic, Injections of starch or a decoction of the bark of the slippery elm with a few drops of Laudanum was very efficacious in relieving the pain. As soon as the more violent symptoms of the disease were removed, I mix'd several medicines were used. A weak decoction of bark for the powder could seldom be retained on the stomach was of weak service, An infusion of Cinnamon with Cinnamon was an excellent restorative. I have not mentioned New-Scotia as a remedy in this disease, it seldom being so violent as to require it, with the exception of a few of the first cases that made their appearance.



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There were many other remedies employed as
the Black Lucy root, the Crows foot boiled in
milk &c. notwithstanding the proper ad-
ministration of these remedies, aided by the greatest
attention of the physician & the patients
friends, they all sometimes failed. Fresh
& Country air may be clasped amongst the
remedies that succeeded for this disease &
now are attended with greater success
A considerable number of children were
carried into the country by the advice of
the Physicians, every one of whom rec-
cured of this disease. Fortunately few fell
victims to this disease, it began to abate
about the middle of July & by the middle
of August all except had entirely dis-
appeared

- appeared, the weather was much more ¹¹
temperate, during the last of July & the
first of August; than it had been in June.
The Cholera Infantum, was followed by
the Remitting Bilious Fever, which was
much more malignant than we for
several years. — ^{on} *Cholera Infantum*

By William J. Bowditch
of Cambridge
Mass.

you have now attained the knowledge
and skill to deal with your country
and in and out the world, you will be
of service still, and, in time, you will be
more and more useful, particularly
when you will have acquired more knowl-
edge and experience.